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SUBJECT: BOSNIA - SILAJDZIC USES STATEHOOD COMMEMORATION TO  
ATTACK SERBIA, INTERNATIONAL "APPEASEMENT"

Classified By: Ambassador Charles English for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Presidency's commemoration of Bosnia's Statehood Day November 20, which marks the 64th anniversary of the declaration of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Anti-Fascist Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ZAVNOBiH) during World War II, took a particularly political and strident tone this year in the midst of the ongoing political crisis. As has been the practice in previous years celebrations, Bosnian-Serb member of the Tri-Presidency Nebojsa Radmanovic did not co-host the event with his Bosniak and Croat colleagues, and Bosnian-Serb officials did not attend. Bosniak member of the Tri-Presidency Haris Silajdzic delivered a vitriolic speech attacking Serbia, the Republika Srpska and international community "appeasement," which several of the guests we spoke with found inappropriate for the occasion. In his own remarks, Croat member of the Tri-Presidency Zeljko Komsic noted the absence of the Bosnian-Serb leadership, linking the World War II struggle against fascism the contemporary nationalism in today's Bosnia. Republika Srpska officials and Bosnian Serb political leaders celebrate Dayton today, November 21, in Banja Luka with the opening of a new RS government building.  
END SUMMARY

BOSNIAN-SERBS MISS STATEHOOD DAY  
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12. (SBU) Presidents Komsic and Silajdzic hosted an official commemoration of Bosnia's Statehood Day on November 20. The event marked the declaration of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina by ZAVNOBiH during World War II and was attended by most Bosniak and some Bosnian Croat leaders at the state and Federation level, High Representative Miroslav Lajcak, the Ambassador, and senior members of the diplomatic community. President Radmanovic did not co-host the event. No Bosnian-Serb officials from either the state or Republika Srpska (RS) government attended the commemoration event. (Note. This is consistent with Bosnian Serb practice in previous years' celebrations. End Note.) Bosnian-Serbs mark November 21, the anniversary of the Dayton Accords, as the official establishment of the Bosnian State. Bosnian Serb and RS leaders will do so by opening the new RS government building in Banja Luka.

SILAJDZIC CLAIMS "APPEASEMENT"

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¶3. (C) Silajdzic opened the ceremony with a lengthy and strident speech recounting the 1992-1995 war, which he said had been initiated by the "fascism and extreme nationalism" of "Milosevic's Serbia... and the self-proclaimed Republika Srpska," adding that the war "ended with the most gruesome crime of all -- the crime of genocide." Silajdzic said that the current political crisis was an attempt to advance Milosevic's agenda, and he accused Belgrade of playing a substantial role in creating the current tensions. Silajdzic also took aim at the international community, particularly the European Union, which he attacked for initialing a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with Serbia.

Silajdzic attacked the EU for ignoring its own SAA conditionally, noting that Serbia had not turned ICTY indictees Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic over to The Hague. Silajdzic stressed that Serbia's failure to do so also violated the remedies prescribed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its February 2007 ruling that Serbia had failed to fulfill its responsibilities under the Genocide Convention. Silajdzic said "such a strategy, however, does not promise results, as history has demonstrated that appeasement of nationalist forces in Serbia in one field has never occasioned a positive resolution of another matter." Many of the guests at the reception following the ceremony told us that they found Silajdzic's speech inappropriate and unnecessarily provocative.

KOMSIC: MUST FIGHT FASCIST IDEOLOGY  
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¶4. (C) President Komsic delivered remarks after President Silajdzic. (Note: Under normal protocol rules, Komsic, as Presidency Chairman, speaks before the other two Presidents

at formal events. Komsic told us during the reception that due to the content of Silajdzic's speech, he elected to speak second in order end the ceremony on a less confrontational note. End Note.) Without directly naming the Bosnian Serbs, Komsic challenged those who did not attend the commemoration and did not hold Statehood Day "sacrosanct." Komsic drew parallels between the efforts of ZAVNOBiH to fight the fascist occupation and create a multi-ethnic state and the current tensions in Bosnia, implying that today's opponents of a united, multiethnic Bosnia were themselves fascists. Komsic called on all citizens to remember the ZAVNOBiH principles and the need to create a "modern democratic state." Komsic accused "political interest groups... (of) protecting their material economic interest" and of "causing fear with ordinary people." After the ceremony, Komsic expanded on these themes of his address, telling us privately that Silajdzic and RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik were jointly working to paralyze Bosnia and to create an environment that advanced their personal financial interests.

COMMENT: ANOTHER SIGN OF WHERE WE ARE  
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¶5. (C) Silajdzic's rhetoric echoed his most strident statements over the last year and effectively urged Bosniaks to continue the politics of grievance rather than reconciliation. He said nothing that would help create a more positive political atmosphere in Bosnia. Even Komsic, whose agenda is closer to ours and who prefers consensus based reform process, was unable to articulate a clear way forward. He, too, devoted the bulk of his address to the past, though he studiously avoided Silajdzic's grievance-laden approach to the day.  
ENGLISH